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REPORT ON THE MASONS

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A REPORT ON MASONRY

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Introduction

At the ninth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, meeting at Rochester, New York, June 2-5, 1942, the Committee on Secret Societies presented its report. The Assembly instructed the Committee to send this report to the ministers and sessions of the Church for their study. The report deals with a matter of such timely importance that the Committee on Christian Education has decided to publish it in its series of "Tracts for Today."

The Committee which drew up the report consisted of R. B. Kuiper, Chairman, Oscar Holkeboer, Arthur O. Olson, Robert A. Wallace, and Paul Woolley. The report is printed exactly as it appeared in the minutes of the ninth General Assembly, except that two introductory paragraphs have been omitted. The Committee on Christian Education is responsible for the title.

I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Masonry and Other Secret Organizations

The mandate given this committee speaks of oath-bound secret societies in general. The committee frankly admits that it has not attempted a detailed investigation of all such societies. To accomplish that would have required even more time than was devoted to the preparation of this report, and much more time than the members of the committee had at their disposal. It may also be doubted whether so comprehensive an investigation is necessary. In the main the committee has restricted its study to that society which is known as the Ancient Order of Free and Accepted Masons. It should be borne in mind that Freemasonry, which is the oldest of the larger secret orders in this country, is generally admitted also to be their mother. Such popular orders as the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Knights of Pythias, the Loyal Order of Moose, the Independent Order of Odd-Fellows, the Improved Order of Red Men, the Woodmen of the World and the Order of the Eastern Star are all of them in many ways similar to their earlier prototype, the Masonic order. Their rituals, secrets, terms of membership, objects and purposes have in varying degree characteristics like those of Masonry. It follows that, if the objections which have been taken to Masonry are well taken, then these same objections apply also in the main to the other orders mentioned and to whatever smaller orders of similar character may exist.

2. Is Reliable Information Available?

An objection frequently raised to any study of secret orders by non-members takes the form of the statement: You cannot get any reliable information.

It may be said categorically that, in the case of the major orders, particularly the Order of Free and Accepted

Masons, this statement is not correct. Reliable information concerning all points of major importance, and concerning many others that are not important, is accessible to any who will make a proper study of the matter.

The so-called secrets of Masonry constitute only a portion of the total activity of the order. The general ideals of Masonry and the history and philosophy of the order have been developed by numerous Masonic and non-Masonic writers in books designed for the general public as well as for Masons. Of course, even Masonic writers do not always agree fully with one another about these matters, but that is true of any field of research. On the whole the agreement among them is striking.

Much of the Masonic ritual is of a non-secret character, and handbooks concerning speeches, statements, prayers and similar matters are published without secrecy. A great mass of useful information concerning the relationship of the order to Christianity is available from volumes of this character.

Further, the so-called ceremonies, grips, passwords and such matters are very largely available through printings by recognized Masonic publishing houses in cipher code. These cipher codes, at least some of them, are not difficult to read. They can be used as original sources of information, and also as checks by which to determine the accuracy of the plain English rituals which have been published by non-Masonic sources. Among the texts and descriptions published by such sources are those emanating from individuals who, for one reason or another, have demitted their membership in the Masonic order. When their evidence agrees with that from Masonic sources something of a check in both directions is provided. This committee has had the privilege of personally interviewing and questioning a former member of the Masonic order who was anxious to provide as much information as desired about the body.

It is worth noting that a Mason, Eugen Lennhoff, who has written one of the most comprehensive and well-balanced books about Masonry, admits that the signs, words and grips, and copies of the Ritual and explanations of the symbols, are obtainable by anyone (**The Freemasons**, p, 18). And in his **Introduction to Free Masonry**, Carl H. Claudy, also a Mason, says: "There is no obligation of secrecy regarding the **truths** taught by Freemasonry, otherwise such a book as this could not lawfully be written" (vol. I, p. 34).

Masonic libraries containing books by Masons of high degree and excellent standing are open to the public. One of these is the Scottish Rite Library of Chicago. Masonic literature may be purchased of the Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company of New York City.

For further information on these particular matters the following books, among others, may be consulted:

Eugen Lennhoff: **The Freemasons.** Translated by Einar Frame. London, Methuen, 1934.

Theodore Graebner: **A Treatise on Freemasonry.** St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1914.

Theodore Graebner: **The Secret Empire.** St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927.

3. Criticisms that Do Not Seem Weighty

Certain criticisms are sometimes offered with relation to secret orders which do not seem to this committee to be of such weight as to constitute valid reasons for objection.

One of these is the objection to secrecy as such. Obviously, there is nothing wrong in secrecy at the proper time and place. Every family has its secrets. Without secrecy in their preparation, academic examinations could hardly be conducted in our institutions of learning. The pastors and sessions of our churches often deal with personal matters which are much better not divulged to the congregation. Our Lord Himself occasionally commanded his

disciples not to reveal to all men things which He told them privately. To be sure, in certain circumstances secrecy is sinful, but it may not be said that secrecy is evil in every instance.

Another objection in the minds of some is to the taking of any oaths whatsoever. Whether or not the oaths required of Masons are reprehensible will be considered at another point in this report. Just now the committee contends merely that the taking of an oath is not to be condemned under any and all circumstances. The Westminster Confession of Faith states that "a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken" (XXII, 2).

Still another objection sometimes brought against Masonry concerns the alleged frivolous character of the symbols, garbs and ritualistic articles used. In particular instances criticism of such matters may be and, as will be pointed out later on, actually is well grounded. But a sweeping charge of frivolity should, in the opinion of this committee, be avoided. The actual meaning, significance and value of symbols, as measured in terms of emotional power, are difficult for a non-participant correctly to gauge. What seems frivolous to an outsider may in actuality not be so at all to the initiate.

Fault has been found with Masonry for barring from membership women, negroes and the physically deformed. The worst that can be said about this provision is that it belies Masonry's boast of universalism. There does indeed seem to be an inconsistency here. But, apart from that, care should be taken not to stress this objection out of measure. Prominent Masons have founded the Order of the Eastern Star for women. The fact that some lodges offer certain insurance benefits to members may be one reason among others for restricting membership to reasonably "good risks." And it surely cannot be said that every organization is in duty bound to open its doors to men of

any and every race.

There are those who interpret "the separated life" so as to rule out the membership of believers together with unbelievers in any organization whatever. They customarily quote 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 to substantiate this view. But that is a serious error. The passage of Scripture just cited condemns the fellowship of Christians and pagans specifically in the matter of religion and worship. To assert that believers may not hold membership with unbelievers in a book club or an automobile club, for instance, savors strongly of Anabaptistic separatism. The apostle Paul took pains to tell members of the Corinthian church that he did not mean that they should have no company with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or idolaters, for then they would needs have to go out of the world (1 Corinthians 5:9). Therefore, to condemn membership of a Christian in the Masonic order on the sole ground that this order contains unbelievers, in unwarranted.

II. THE RELIGION OF MASONRY

1. The Issue Stated

The foregoing paragraph has named the point on which this investigation must be centered. Is Masonry a religious order, or is it not? That is the crucial question. If it should prove that the answer to this question must be affirmative, then the further question, no less crucial than the first, will arise, what the religion of Masonry is. If it is Christianity, well and good. If it is anything but Christianity, the religion of Masonry is necessarily false, for it is axiomatic that Christianity is the only true religion. And in that case no Christian may have communion with Masonry.

2. Is Masonry a Religion?

On this score the evidence is overwhelming. There is no room for any reasonable doubt as to Masonry's being a

religion. Not only do the symbols, rites and temples of this order point unmistakably to it as a religion, but a great many Masonic authors of note emphatically declare it to be just that. Of almost numberless quotations that could be given here the committee has selected a few.

J. S. M. Ward, the author of several standard Masonic works, defines religion as "a system of teaching moral truth associated with a belief in God" and then declares: "I consider Freemasonry is a sufficiently organized school of mysticism to be entitled to be called a religion." He goes on to say: "I boldly aver that Freemasonry is a religion, yet in no way conflicts with any other religion, unless that religion holds that no one outside its portals can be saved" (**Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals,** pp. 182, 185, 187).

T. S. Webb says in his **Masonic Monitor:** "The meeting of a Masonic Lodge is strictly a religious ceremony. The religious tenets of Masonry are few, simple, but fundamental. No lodge or Masonic assembly can be regularly opened or closed without prayer" (p. 284).

Albert G. Mackey, General High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of the United States, and the author of numerous works on Masonry, has this to say: "Freemasonry is emphatically a religious institution; it teaches the existence of God. It points to the celestial canopy above where is the Eternal Lodge and where **He** presides. It instructs us in the way to reach the portals of that distant temple" **The Mystic Tie,** p. 32). And in his **Lexicon of Freemasonry** the same celebrated authority asserts: "The religion, then, of Masonry is pure Theism" (p. 404).

Extremely significant is the testimony of Joseph Fort Newton, a zealous advocate of Masonic principles. He deplores the fact that within the lodge there are many who regard it as "a mere social order inculcating ethical ideals and practicing philanthropy." He continues: "As some of us prefer to put it, Masonry is not a religion but Religion —not a church but a worship, in which men of all religions

may unite" (**The Religion of Masonry**, pp. 10, 11). With this agrees A. G. Mackey's declaration: "The truth is that Masonry is undoubtedly a religious institution, its religion being of that universal kind in which all men agree" (**Textbook of Masonic Jurisdiction**, p. 95).

To be sure, H. L. Haywood says that "there is no such thing as a Masonic philosophy, just as there is no such thing as a Masonic religion" (**The Great Teachings of Masonry**, p. 18). But on careful analysis it becomes clear that he means that Masonry is not to be put in a class with other religions; in a word, that it is a super-religion. For he asserts that Masonry has a religious foundation all its own and that its religion is universal (Idem, p. 99). No doubt, Haywood would agree with Newton that "Masonry is not a religion, but Religion."

Such is the unmistakable testimony, not of critics of Masonry, but of Masonic authors who are recognized by Masonry itself as authorities.

3. The Religion of Masonry Evaluated

In seeking to evaluate the religion of Masonry our standard must be Christianity, the one true religion. That Masonry cannot be simply non-Christian is self-evident. Neutrality with reference to Christianity is an obvious impossibility. Either Masonry as a religion is in agreement with Christianity, or it must be at odds with Christianity. Either it is Christian, or it must be anti-Christian. A comparison on several important points of the religious teaching of Masonry with that of Christianity should reveal which of these two possibilities in the abstract is concrete reality.

a. The Origin of Masonic Religion

Christianity is based squarely upon God's supernatural revelation in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testa-

ments. Many Masonic authorities take pains to deny that Masonry is based upon the Bible. A. G. Mackey's **Encyclopedia of Freemasonry** informs us that in Masonry the Bible is regarded only as a symbol of the will of God and is on a par with the sacred books of other religions (p. 104). And in speaking of the Blue Lodge, which is the foundation of all Masonry, both the York Rite and the Scottish Rite, Chase's **Digest of Masonic Law** declares: "Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible; if it did, it would not be Masonry, it would be something else" (p. 207).

Many authorities maintain that Masonry is rooted in ancient paganism. For example, J. S. M. Ward, who after fourteen years of research wrote his greatest book, **Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods,** traces the religious tenets of Masonry back to the religions of India and ancient Mexico and the mysteries of pagan Egypt and Rome (for example, p. 341). And A. T. C. Pierson, another celebrated interpreter of Masonry, says in his **Traditions, Origin and Early History of Freemasonry** that Masonic religion comes from the Orient and has reference to primitive religion, whose first occupation was the worship of the sun (p. 34). Several Masonic authors put forth the claim that Masonry represents the oldest religious system in the world and constitutes the common basis on which all the religious systems of history were founded.

Whatever one may think of Masonry's claims to antiquity, it is clear that James Putt, a critic of Masonry, states the case well when he concludes as to the origin of Masonry: "This, then, is the situation. Masonry claims to be the essence of all religions. It guards the most ancient esoteric worship. It aims at a universal religion on the basis of the religious aspirations of man. It is naturalistic and evolutionistic rather than supernaturalistic and revelationary" (**Masonry,** p. 24).

b. The God of Masonry

The God of Christianity is the God of the Bible, the Holy Trinity. Is He also the God of Masonry, or is Masonry's God another? Recognized Masonic authorities themselves supply the answer.

Says T. S. Webb in his **Masonic Monitor:** "So broad is the religion of Masonry, and so carefully are all sectarian tenets excluded from the system, that the Christian, the Jew, and the Mohammedan, in all their numberless sects and divisions, may and do harmoniously combine in its moral and intellectual work, with the Buddhist, the Parsee, the Confucian, and the worshiper of Deity under every form" (p. 285). This amounts to saying that the God of Masonry is that Diety which is worshiped by the adherents of all religions alike. That the Christian conception of God differs essentially from all other conceptions of God and that the God of the Bible is God alone—these truths are ignored and by necessary implication denied.

In perfect harmony with Webb's teaching concerning the God of Masonry is J. S. M. Ward's statement: "Freemasonry has taught each man can, by himself work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation" (**Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals,** p. 187). But Christianity maintains that only the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible is truly God and that all other Gods, products as they are of human speculation, are idols.

The divine transcendence is boldly denied by J. F. Newton. After lauding as the three great rituals of the human race the Prajapati ritual of ancient Hinduism, the Mass of the Christian Church and the Third Degree of Masonry, he says: "These testify to the profoundest insight of the human soul that God becomes man and that man may become God" (**The Religion of Masonry,** p. 37).

In a pamphlet entitled **The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders,** and published by the American Unitarian Association, E. A. Coil, minister of the

First Unitarian Society of Marietta, Ohio, and one-time Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge of that city, pleads for closer cooperation between the liberal churches and the fraternal orders. He bases his plea on the contention that both have essentially the same conception of God. Both, he holds, believe in the universal fatherhood of God (p. 9). With this agrees J. F. Newton's assertion: "The basis of our Temple of Fraternity rests back upon the reality of the Divine Fatherhood" (**The Religion of Masonry**, p. 116). Needless to say, the universal Father of all mankind is not the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of those who through faith in Him have received the right to be called the sons of God (John 1:12).

c. Masonry and the Word of God

As was already shown, Masonry disclaims being founded upon the Bible. Says A. G. Mackey: "Within a few years an attempt has been made by some Grand Lodges to add to these simple moral and religious qualifications another, which requires a belief in the divine authenticity of the Scriptures. It is much to be regretted that Masons will sometimes forget the fundamental law of their institution, and endeavor to add or detract from the perfect integrity of the building as it was left them by their predecessors. Whenever this is done, the beauty of our temple must suffer. . . . Thus, in the instance here referred to, the fundamental law of Masonry requires only a belief in the Supreme Architect of the universe, and in a future life, while it says with peculiar toleration, that in all matters of religious belief Masons are only expected to be of that religion in which all men agree. . . . Under the shelter of this wise provision, the Christian and the Jews, the Mohammedan and the Brahmin are permitted to unite around a common altar, and Masonry becomes in practice, as well as in theory, universal" (**Text-book of Masonic Jurisprudence**, pp. 94, 95).

It is significant, however that in Masonic ritual in use in so-called Christian lands, as Great Britain and the United States, quotations from Holy Scripture abound. It cannot be doubted that this fact has blinded the eyes of many to the real character of the Masonic order. And yet, no keen discernment is required to penetrate this thin veil of seeming Christianity. Regarding itself as the essence of all religions, Masonry has no difficulty adapting itself to the prevailing religion of any land. Therefore, in a historically Christian country like America it employs the Bible in its ritual and by the same token it employs the Koran in Moslem countries. As a matter of fact, eminent Masons, such as A. G. Mackey, openly avow that for them the Bible and the sacred books of other religions are all in a class (**Encyclopedia of Freemasonry**, p. 104).

Frequently in Masonic ritual the inspired Word of God is seriously mutilated, and in many instances this mutilation consists in the omission of the name of Jesus Christ. In Mackey's **Masonic Ritualist** the name of Christ is omitted from 1 Peter 2:5 (p. 271), 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (p.348), and 2 Thessalonians 3:12 (p. 349). With reference to the elision of the Saviour's name from 1 Peter 2:5 the following explanation is offered: "The passages are taken, with slight but necessary modifications from the First Epistle of Peter . . ." (p. 272). The reason for this modification is obvious. Masonry does not claim to be Christian but, on the contrary, purports to be the essence of all religions; therefore, its ritual has no place for distinctly Christian material. That the omission of the Name which is above every name is described as a **slight but necessary** modification speaks volumes.

In view of the foregoing it is to be expected that the name of Christ would be omitted also from the prayers offered in the lodge. As a matter of fact W. P. Loveless, a former Masonic chaplain who seceded, has this to say: "As Chaplain in the Masonic Lodge I offered the prayers

of the Lodge and heard many others offered, but never one in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name is excluded" (**The Christian and Secret Societies**, p. 14).

Time and again in Masonic ritual portions of the Word of God are erroneously—and, it must be said, even blasphemously—applied. One striking instance may be cited. On page 286 of Mackey's **Masonic Ritualist** is found an etching of the Masonic keystone. Above it and alongside of it one reads: "The following passages of Scriptures are here appropriately introduced:—'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head stone of the corner.'—Acts iv. 11 'To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.'—Rev. ii. 17."

The same blasphemous use of the Holy Scripture appears in the following quotation from J. S. M. Ward's **Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods:** "Light is the key which opens the door to our mysteries, and it is the same Light which 'shines in every letter of the Koran,' and is the Light of Mithra, who is the light of Ahura-Mazda. It is the same Light from which Moses shaded his eyes when it appeared to him in the bush, and the sign of a R(oyal) A(rch) is still made by an Arunta native of Australia when he returns from the final degree through which he passes in the mysterious ceremonies peculiar to that primitive people. It is that Light of which it is written in our Scriptures that 'the Light shineth in the Darkness and the Darkness comprehended it not' " (pp. 61, 62).

It is no exaggeration to assert that Masonry does most serious violence to the inscripturated Word of God and does the gravest despite to Jesus Christ, the personal Word.

d. The Ethics of Masonry

In his **Text-book of Masonic Jurisprudence** A. G. Mackey is careful to explain that the moral law of Masonry is

not the moral law of the Bible. We read: "Every Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey moral law. Now this moral law is not to be considered as confined to the decalogue of Moses, within which narrow limits the ecclesiastical writers technically retain it, but rather as alluding to what is called the lex naturae or the law of nature. This is the moral law to which the old charge already cited refers, and which it declares to be the law of Masonry. And this was wisely done, for it is evident that no law less universal could have been appropriately selected for the government of an institution whose prominent characteristic is its universality. The precepts of Jesus could not have been made obligatory upon a Jew; a Christian would have denied the sanctions of the Koran; a Mohammedan must have rejected the law of Moses, and a disciple of Zoroaster would have turned from all to the teachings of his Zend Avesta. The universal law of nature, which the authors of the 'Old Charges' have properly called the moral law, is, therefore, the only law suited in every respect to be adopted as the Masonic code" (p. 502).

H. L. Haywood in his **Great Teachings of Masonry** places Masonic ethics on an experiential, humanistic and utilitarian basis. Says this teacher of Masonry: "Human experience, both individual and racial, is the one final authority in morals. . . . Wrong is whatever hurts human life or destroys human happiness . . . Acts are not right or wrong intrinsically but according as their effects are hurtful or helpful" (p. 39). More blatant disregard of the law of God is hardly imaginable.

In this connection reference must be made to Masonic oaths. According to Theodore Graebner's **A Treatise on Freemasonry** (pp. 22, 23), the following is an example of the very first oath required in Masonry, that for a candidate being initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason:

> "I,----------, of my own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and his Worshipful

Lodge, erected to Him and dedicated to the Holy Saint John, do hereby and hereon most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will always hail, ever conceal, and never reveal any of the secret arts, parts, or points of the hidden mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, which have been heretofore, may at this time, or shall at any future period be communicated to me as such, to any person or persons whomsoever, except it be to a true and lawful brother Mason, or within a regularly constituted Lodge of Masons, and neither unto him nor them, until by strict trial, due examination, or legal information I shall have found him or them as lawfully entitled to the same as I am myself.

I furthermore promise and swear that I will not write, print, paint, stamp, stain, cut, carve, make, nor engrave them, nor cause the same to be done upon anything movable or immovable, capable of receiving the least impression of a word, syllable, letter, or character, whereby the same may become legible or intelligible to any person under the canopy of heaven, and the secrets of Freemasonry be thereby unlawfully obtained through my unworthiness.

To all of this I must solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution to keep and perform the same without any equivocation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind whatever, binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the rough sands of the sea at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this my solemn oath or obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same."

From the viewpoint of Christian ethics this oath is open to serious criticism on more than one score. The

Christian, bound as he is to maintain justice and equity before God and man to the best of his powers, has no right to pledge himself in advance to keep secret something the bearing of which on questions of justice and morals he cannot know. And, aside from the question whether an oath is not too solemn a transaction for a ceremony of such doubtful importance as reception into a mere human organization, it must be said without hesitation that the violence of this oath is plainly contrary to our Lord's principles of speech as set forth in Matthew 5:34-37.

According to the cipher ritual a Master Mason takes the solemn pledge "that I will not have illicit carnal intercourse with a brother's wife, his mother, sister or daughter, I knowing them to be such." In the opinion of the committee some critics of Masonry are too severe in their denunciation of this pledge. For example, it has been said evidently to leave "no closed season" for other women and to protect even a Masonic brother's women relatives only when they are known to be such. That seems to be an exaggeration. A promise to abstain from illicit intercourse with some women does not necessarily imply a reservation of liberty to engage in such intercourse with other women. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that this pledge does introduce a distinction which is not only foreign to Christian ethics, but even contrary to it. Christianity demands that a man respect the chastity, not merely of certain women, but of all alike.

e. Salvation According to Masonry

Every religion has a doctrine of salvation, and to that rule Masonry is no exception. Is the Masonic teaching on this important subject in harmony with the teaching of Holy Writ, or are the two at variance with each other? The answer to that question may well be unequivocal.

Christianity claims to be the only true religion and to set forth the one and only way of salvation. Christ Him-

self declared: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). But Masonry teaches that there is salvation in other religions as well. W. L. Wilmhurst, Grand Registrar of West Yorkshire District, says: "Our science in its universality limits our conception to no one exemplar. Take the nearest and most familiar to you, the one under whose aegis you were racially born and who therefore may serve you best; for each is able to bring you to the center, though each may have his separate method. To the Jewish brother it says: 'Take the father of the faithful, and realize what being gathered to his bosom means.' To the Christian brother, it points to him upon whose breast lay the beloved disciple. To the Hindoo brother it points to Krishna, etc. To the Buddhist it points to the Maitreja of universal compassion. And to the Moslem, it points to his Prophet, and to the significance of being clothed in his mantle" (**The Masonic Initiation**, p. 105). According to the July 10, 1940, issue of **The Covenanter Witness**, J. S. M. Ward has attempted to express the same thought in verse:

"Bacchus died and rose again,
On the golden Syrian Plain;
Osiris rose from out his grave,
And thereby mankind did save;
Adonis likewise did shed his blood
By the yellow Syrian flood;
Zoroaster brought to birth
Mirthra from his cave of earth.
And we today in Christian lands
We with them can join hands."

The Christian doctrine of salvation is heterosoteric; it teaches that man must be saved by another. Masonry's

doctrine of salvation, on the other hand, is autosoteric; it teaches that man must and can save himself. "Freemasonry," we are told by J. S. M. Ward, "has taught that each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation (**Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals**, p. 187). And in his book, **What Masonry Means**, which is warmly recommended in an introduction by J. F. Newton, William F. Hammond says: "Masonry's conception of immortality is something for which man must qualify while still in the flesh. Through the fellowship of a moral discipline Masons are taught to qualify for the fellowship of eternal life" (p. 171).

The Christian way of salvation is supernatural. But the Masonic way of salvation is naturalistic. According to Christianity the new birth is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. According to many Masonic authorities a person is born again through initiation into the lodge. H. L. Haywood, for instance, declares: "The whole process (of initiation) should be made one of the most crucial experiences of the candidate's life, one that will change him to the center of his being . . . It is like the moral and spiritual change which comes over a man who passes through the religious experience known as 'conversion' or 'regeneration' . . . Masonic initiation is intended to be quite as profound and revolutionizing an experience. As a result of it the candidate should become a new man" (**The Great Teachings of Masonry**, pp. 30, 31).

Salvation by grace is the very core of the Christian doctrine of salvation. But Masonry boldly teaches salvation by works and character. Says William E. Hammond: "Masonry inculcates faith in immortality as indispensable to moral living and urges its members to qualify for eternal life by the practice of those qualities—integrity, fellowship and service—which may reasonably be expected to constitute the felicity of a future life" (**What Masonry Means**, p. 175). At this point may be introduced two somewhat

lengthy quotations from the pointed pamphlet, **The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders,** by E. A. Coil, a Unitarian minister and a Masonic Worshipful Master. Says this clear-headed writer: "That the fundamental difference in the principles embodied in the historic creeds of Christendom and those of our modern secret orders has not been clearly thought out is indicated by the fact that many pledge themselves to both. There are lodge men who, in the churches, subscribe to the doctrine that 'We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings,' and enthusiastically join in the singing of hymns in which that idea is embodied. Then in their lodge meetings they just as enthusiastically assent to the following declaration: 'Although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet that All-Seeing-Eye whom the sun, moon and stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits'. A little child, once its attention is called to the matter, ought to be able to see that it is impossible to harmonize the creed statement here quoted, with the declaration taken from the monitor of one of our greatest and most effective secret orders, and found, in substance, in the liturgies of nearly all the others. If 'We are accounted righteous before God, for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings,' then it cannot possibly be true that the All-Seeing Eye 'Pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits.' One of those declarations excludes the other. Men cannot consistently subscribe to both" (pp. 10, 11). Coil goes on to say: "I have been devoting much time to an investigation of the subject, and I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that the liberal churches, from their beginning,

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have been developing in thought and sentiment, along the same lines as those followed by most of our great modern fraternities. They have championed and advocated the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, immortality, and salvation by character, and these are the very principles for which nearly all the great fraternities stand. Taught these principles in childhood, as they should be taught them in the Sunday schools and churches, people will not have to unlearn or deny them should they choose to identify themselves with almost any one of our present day fraternities, as those brought up in 'Orthodox' Sunday schools and churches have to unlearn, deny or ignore much that has been taught them if they become members of a lodge" (pp. 17, 18).

f. The Brotherhood of Masonry

Scripture tells us that God "made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Therefore it is not amiss to assert that there is a physical brotherhood of all men. It may even be admitted that by virtue of such remnants in fallen man of the original image of God as reason and conscience, all men are brothers in more than a physical sense. But Scripture emphatically denies that the universal brotherhood of man is spiritual. On the contrary, it teaches that there is an absolute spiritual antithesis between believers and unbelievers. Spiritually they are opposites like righteousness and iniquity, light and darkness, Christ and Belial (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15).

Masonry boasts of the brotherhood of its members and glories in the universal brotherhood of man. Says J. F. Newton: "If one were asked to define Masonry in a single sentence, it would be to say: Masonry is the realization of God by the practice of brotherhood." He goes on to describe universal brotherhood as physical and intellectual and spiritual. It is spiritual, according to him, because,

while religions are many, "Religion is One." He adds that the genius of the religion of Jesus was "the extension of the idea of the family to include all humanity" (**The Religion of Masonry**, pp. 116, 123ff.). And E. A. Coil says: "It is becoming more and more clear to me as the facts relating to the subject are brought out, that the fraternities and churches called 'Liberal' have been working along parallel lines; but, because the one puts the chief emphasis upon the fatherhood of God, and therefore emphasizes theology, while the other puts the chief emphasis upon the brotherhood of man, and therefore emphasizes sociology, they have not realized that they were occupying practically the same ground" (**The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders**, pp. 9, 10).

g. The Universalism of Masonry

There is a Christian universalism. God has His elect in every age and every nation. Ever since the the fall of man the Son of God has been gathering the elect into His church by His Word and Spirit. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Him (Galatians 3:28). John saw the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb and he heard them sing: "Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

Masonry also lays claim to universalism, but its universalism differs radically from that of Christianity in that it denies Christian particularism and exclusivism.

Christianity claims to have the only true book, the Bible. Masonry places this book on a par with the sacred books of other religions.

Christianity lays claim to the only true God, the God of the Bible, and denounces all other Gods as idols. Masonry recognizes the Gods of all religions.

Christianity describes God as the Father of Jesus Christ and of those who through faith in Him have received the right to be called the sons of God. The God of Masonry is the universal father of all mankind.

Christianity holds that only the worship of the God who has revealed Himself in Holy Scripture is true worship. Masonry honors as true worship the worship of numerous other dieties.

Christianity recognizes but one Saviour, Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. Masonry recognizes many saviours.

Christianity acknowledges but one way of salvation, that of grace through faith. Masonry rejects this way and substitutes for it salvation by works and character.

Christianity teaches the brotherhood of those who believe in Christ, the communion of saints, the church universal, the one body of Christ. Masonry teaches the brotherhood of Masons and the universal brotherhood of man.

Christianity glories in being the one truly universal religion. Masonry would rob Christianity of this glory and appropriate it to itself.

Christianity maintains that it is the only true religion. Masonry denies this claim and boasts of being Religion itself.

III. CONCLUSION

The committee finds that the evidence presented concerning the religion of Masonry permits but one conclusion. Although a number of the objections commonly brought against Masonry seem to the committee not to be weighty, yet it is driven to the conclusion that Masonry is a religious institution and as such is definitely anti-Christian.

Far be it from the committee to assert that there are no Christians among the members of the Masonic fraternity. Just as a great many who trust for eternal life solely in the merits of Christ continue as members of churches

that have denied the faith, so undoubtedly many sincere Christians, uninformed, or even misinformed, concerning the true character of Freemasonry, hold membership in it without compunction of conscience. But that in no way alters the fact that membership in the Masonic fraternity is inconsistent with Christianity.

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